

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**THE INTERAGENCY PROCESS—ANALYSIS AND REFORM RECOMMENDATIONS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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What is generally stipulated among scholars, government leaders and military professionals is that our current national security apparatus lacks capacity to effectively implement national strategies across the interagency. The capacity in question centers on interagency unity of effort that synchronizes diverse cultures, competing interests and differing priorities of government institutions while embracing valuable expertise and experience. The National Security Council's interagency process, resident in the Executive Office of the President, provides advice but lacks the authority to direct responses across the U.S. Government. No single government entity possesses sufficient capacity for unilateral response, thus interagency coordination is necessary to synchronize instruments of national power and thereby apply unified strength toward resolving threats to our national security. Assessing the nature of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century security threat manifested in complex contingencies such as the terrorist attacks of 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, and the Global War on Terrorism, is the first step in crafting an effective interagency reform strategy. Second, an analysis of the existing interagency process reveals strengths and weaknesses upon which to build greater interagency capacity. Finally, this analysis offers reform recommendations of legislative, organizational, and cultural nature to improve interagency policy implementation in support of national security.



## THE INTERAGENCY PROCESS— ANALYSIS AND REFORM RECOMMENDATIONS

Myriad writings of scholars, strategic thinkers and military leaders provide analysis and reform recommendations of the U.S. Government's (USG) interagency process. Recent increasing volume indicates growing concern for evolving our existing national security apparatus to meet the demands of a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous threat environment. Many reports grant the existing process generates appropriate national policies and strategies to address vital security interests; however, implementation accountability is viewed as lacking.

The president owns the interagency process resident in the National Security Council (NSC) though no one below the commander-in-chief possesses directive authority to ensure implementation across the USG of the policies he ultimately approves. Existing law and policy stipulate this is the way it is supposed to be, yet asymmetrical and rapidly changing threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century require a more agile and responsive interagency system. The time has come to implement interagency reform via legislative process, education and training, and a common regional view of national security interests across USG institutions.

Upon review of the contemporary security environment, this project examines the interagency process through its historical and current arrangements in order to identify strengths and weaknesses, from which reform recommendations emerge. The legislative recommendation to create an Office of the Director of Interagency Coordination surfaces following review of USG response to recent complex contingencies, environmental scanning, and encouraging supportive hints from senior officials. Additionally, recommendations to improve education, training and regional orientation within the interagency and supporting departments and agencies, would enhance coordination during preparation and planning in order to better understand diverse cultures and priorities, while capitalizing on experience and expertise of the stakeholders.

### The Security Environment

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century security environment is an era of complexity and uncertainty in which the United States faces myriad and diverse challenges. Threat assessments documented in our National Defense Strategy indicate the U.S. is less vulnerable and less likely threatened by traditional nation-states employing uniformed military formations than by irregular challenges from rogue actors employing unconventional methods.<sup>1</sup> However, in the nearly twenty years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, signifying the end of the Cold War, the U.S. has been engaged,

domestically and abroad, in dozens of complex contingency operations ranging from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to limited conventional conflict. The majority of these operations fall along the lower end of the spectrum of military operations. Two domestic operations illustrate USG interagency response to crisis—the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina.

“When nineteen terrorists hijacked four planes, murdering at least 2973 men, women, and children from seventy countries, it was clear the status quo could no longer be tolerated.”<sup>2</sup> An enemy striving for world domination under a *caliphate* had declared war against the United States, western infidels and Muslim apostates, and would employ irregular, unconventional tactics of terrorism, insurgency, and potentially weapons of mass destruction (WMD) against diplomatic, economic, and military centers of power to achieve their ideological goals. *The 9/11 Commission Report on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States* noted, “The most important failure was one of imagination.”<sup>3</sup> Imagination that terrorist attacks against U.S. sovereignty at home and abroad over more than a decade might continue to escalate ultimately resulting in a catastrophic attack on U.S. soil. In the words of our president, “To defeat this threat we must make use of every tool in our arsenal.”<sup>4</sup>

Four years following the attacks of 9/11, ask the average American citizen to consider shortly the post-Hurricane Katrina devastation. Months after the disaster relief mission began, news stories continue to capture national attention with compassion for the suffering masses struggling to get their lives back in order, and anger with an unacceptable national response.

In its report of mid-February 2006, the House “Select Committee believes Katrina was primarily a failure of initiative.”<sup>5</sup> The national response plan, signed a mere eight months prior to the hurricane that struck in August 2005, stipulates interagency support and coordination requirements, acknowledged and endorsed by signature of fifteen cabinet officials and leaders of many federal disaster response agencies. Yet a lack of implementation accountability across the interagency, combined with failures at the local, state, and national levels to anticipate, plan, prepare, and respond to catastrophic natural disaster have most recently elevated to substantial criticism of our commander-in-chief. What did the president know about the storm; the nation’s collective state of preparedness; the predictive damage assessments, and when did he know it?

It is instructive to consider why the president has drawn such personal criticism with regard to the Katrina response. There is arguably a political spin to the media coverage and potential partisan motivation to gain traction in a congressional election year by distancing oneself from failed policy or response. That aside, closer examination of our national security apparatus reveals that no one below the president has the lawful authority to direct

implementation of a national strategy across the interagency. The principal federal official—with delegated presidential authority to direct federal response—joins the fight when the situation becomes a crisis. Thus, the question arises, how does the NSC, and by extension the president, ensure adequate implementation of national strategies with interagency implications, in advance of crisis?

Between 9/11 and Katrina, the USG flexed all instruments of national power—diplomatic, information, military and economic—with varying degree of success in four operations worth mentioning briefly for their implications on interagency reform. During the tsunami in Southeast Asia and the earthquake in Northwest Pakistan, USG response to foreign disaster relief missions generated considerable good will among nations with whom US relations had been tested and strained during the GWOT and in regions vital to our national interests. During operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the USG and coalitions of the willing removed regimes, defeated military forces and continue to this day with interagency stabilization and reconstruction operations. Interestingly, of these six complex contingencies, only two—9/11 and Katrina—generated bipartisan commission reports to examine the adequacy of government-wide response. It is beyond the scope of this project to develop the cause and effect relationship between response to complex contingencies and commission reports—perhaps we got it right; the jury is still out; or domestic crises energize greater political response. Nevertheless, both reports indicate unity of effort within and between USG agencies, departments, and bureaus was lacking.

The diverse milieu of complex contingencies requiring US action across the spectrum of military operations from disaster relief to limited conventional conflict since the new millennium began clearly indicate an evolving threat environment; one for which the USG must transform. For nearly two decades, U.S. forces were deployed all over the non-integrating gap countries conducting myriad operations across the spectrum of conflict. The U.S. has been involved in seven stability and reconstruction missions in the last fifteen years. This trend will likely continue if our national threat assessments are accurate and we continue in a state of prolonged conflict prosecuting the GWOT by denying sanctuary in weak or ungoverned areas. However, the military alone cannot secure the nation's vital interests. Our success in securing national interests lies in our ability to synchronize and coordinate all the instruments of national power to implement our strategies and achieve national goals. Given the stakes involved—U.S. national security—this paper explores a more robust means of ensuring interagency policy compliance beyond what the existing NSC has committed to the process.

### Historical Development of the Interagency

The president's foremost responsibility—one that has concerned U.S. presidents since the birth of the nation—is to provide for the national security of the United States. To do so, he must harness all of the instruments of national power in a unified effort to defeat threats and promote national interests. Though the roots of interagency coordination are founded in our constitution, the contemporary system of national strategic policy development and interagency coordination did not officially emerge until 1947.

“At the end of WWII, Congress sought to pass legislation that would, in part, reorganize the conduct of national security affairs for the US Government to ensure that a surprise attack upon the United States, such as that inflicted at Pearl Harbor, would never again occur.”<sup>6</sup> President Truman, following a review of intelligence information available at dispersed agencies of government was reported to have concluded, “If we'd all had that information in one agency, by God, I believe we could have foreseen what was going to happen in Pearl Harbor.”<sup>7</sup> Many congressional bills in the inter-war years proposed similar government reorganization. But it was the will of the people that rose to legislative heights—expressed in congressional leadership—to answer the question, “How could this have happened?” that drove government change. The National Security Act of 1947 (NSA47) statutorily imposed upon the chief executive a new system designed to improve the integration of national security strategy—the National Security Council.

NSA47 “directs that the function of the NSC shall be to advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies related to the national security so as to enable the military services and the other departments and agencies of the government to cooperate more effectively in matters involving national security.”<sup>8</sup> The interagency refers to a systemic process of executive department coordination rather than any particular organization or place. Developing and implementing national security policies requires the NSC to accomplish the following:

- ensure the president has all necessary information
- identify a full range of policy options for development
- conduct thorough risk management for each option
- ensure legal considerations are addressed
- identify implementation difficulties
- include all NSC principals in the development process.<sup>9</sup>



This watershed change to the national security apparatus served the nation well throughout the Cold War, though even in its mid-life, friction existed in the interagency. In an autumn 2000 *Parameters* article, David Tucker cites a 1961 joint staff memorandum that expressed the challenges associated with interagency planning due to differing cultures, priorities and decision-making processes among myriad stakeholders. "If we are to have interagency coordination, the memorandum warns, these inhibitions of other governmental agencies must in some way be overcome."<sup>10</sup>

Each president since Truman has employed the NSC staff with varying degrees of responsibility and authority. For instance, the role of the National Security Advisor (NSA), as personal advisor not subject to congressional approval or oversight, is however, subject to presidential personality and management style. "In general, the National Security Advisor's primary role is to *advise* the President, *advance* the President's national security policy agenda, and *oversee* the effective operation of the interagency system (italics added)."<sup>11</sup> Congress facilitates a flexible NSC for the president by traditionally providing wide berth when it comes to NSC staffing, organization, and focus and historical acquiescence to the president's fiscal requirements to run the Executive Office of the President (EOP). Substantive experts of the NSC staff have ranged from as little as 12 in 1962 under President Kennedy to its current—and largest—configuration of 225 professionals.<sup>12</sup> Often times, resources—people and funds—are 'invested' from subordinate departments and agencies to execute NSC functions. Thus, the NSC staff has been cut and shaped at the pleasure of the president; to address emerging threats and opportunities to national interests; or resultant from presidential or congressional commissions in the aftermath of response to strategic crises (i.e., Pearl Harbor, 9/11, Hurricane Katrina...etc).

#### Current Interagency Process

National Security Presidential Directive #1 (NSPD1), signed by President Bush on 13 February 2001, specifies composition and purpose of a vertical hierarchy of a Principals Committee (PC), Deputies Committee (DC), and Policy Coordination Committees (PCC). The Principals Committee is the senior interagency forum for consideration of policy issues affecting national security. The Deputies Committee serves as the senior sub-Cabinet interagency forum for consideration of policy issues affecting national security and can prescribe and review the work of subordinate interagency groups. The Policy Coordination Committees manage the development and implementation of national security policies by multiple agencies of the USG.<sup>13</sup> The type and quantity of PCCs are often driven by current events, threats and opportunities,

and crisis operations. For example, following 9/11 the number of functionally oriented PCCs increased from eleven in NSPD1 to the present number, twenty-four. It can be accurately considered that the PCC is the lowest level of the upper crest of interagency operations. Those below the PCC, at the various government departments and agencies, are the implementing departments most concerned with matching policy ends to internal means and developing implementation ways to achieve policy directives. The hierarchal structure of the NSC's interagency process elevates to the president issues of vital national interest and/or those for which consensus is not achieved at lower levels.

The existing national security apparatus provides sufficient guidance, structure and process description for national-level interagency policy development. The status-quo enables the president and NSA to refine the function and composition of the NSC adding PCCs or national centers as the security situation dictates. The president owns the interagency process and employs the NSA as its system administrator. It resides within the EOP, is supported by law and when the hierarchical committees cannot achieve consensus in the interagency world, there exists a short and direct route to the president for resolution. The interagency process is tailored functionally and regionally as necessary by individual presidential leadership style and decision-making idiosyncrasies, and formalized via the NSPD, or its historical equivalent. The NSC staff contracts or expands due to initiatives from within the EOP or by legislative means, yet continues to endure as an adaptive organization.

#### Assessment of the Interagency Process—Why Change?

According to the *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols Phase II Report* prepared by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in July 2005, several ingredients determine successful implementation of security reforms. Three are important to mention here. Congressionally led efforts are more likely to lead to lasting change than those launched exclusively by the executive branch; calamities spur reform efforts (Pearl Harbor, 9/11, Katrina), thus the timing of the reform initiative is critical; and incremental reform initiatives historically have a much better chance of success than radical, broad, sweeping proposals. The reform constituents and their respective wills often form the catalyst for change and are considered the greatest risk to implementation.<sup>14</sup> The ultimate risk associated with a national security strategy and interagency process that do not work is another catastrophic event, where the warning signs were everywhere; 'the system was flashing red' and USG agencies were unable to connect the dots sufficiently in advance to protect America's vital national interests.

This is not to suggest that interagency reform is necessary simply because we have the right ingredients in the cupboard, but these catalysts for change compel further examination.

Waxing congressional leadership in recent years indicate amplified recognition of their important role in national security. Since 2002, “Congress has created new or substantially revised national security structures—a Homeland Security Council and Director of National Intelligence—to join the interagency space between departments and agencies and the President which the NSC previously occupied alone.”<sup>15</sup> Most recently, the heated debate regarding foreign ownership of American seaport terminal operations persuaded the president, in part, to wane from his initially strong position of supporting foreign ownership. Finally, the bipartisan commission reports in the aftermath of 9/11 and Katrina underscore congressional interest in shoring up perceived weakness of the interagency to improve USG response to national security threats. Recognizing the historical acquiescence to presidential prerogative with regard to operations within the EOP, this represents a significant change, and one that may offer additional opportunities for further legislative reform.

Other potential reform constituents are also expressing their respective wills in words and deeds for moderate interagency reform. For instance, Secretary Rice’s recent initiatives to improve operational capacity of the State Department to perform USG lead-agent responsibilities for planning, preparing for, and overseeing execution of stabilization and reconstruction operations enabled significant organizational restructuring and human resource management initiatives. In a 2004 speech, General Peter Pace (then Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and current Chairman) assessed interagency shortcomings when he said, “The current system does a great job of teeing up the issues of the day for the President...but once the President decides to do something, then our government goes back into stovepipes for execution.”<sup>16</sup> In 2004, then Secretary of Homeland Security, Tom Ridge, negotiated a letter of agreement with fifteen cabinet member signatures (and other federal response agencies) requiring—among other things—improved interagency coordination in response to domestic threats. Moreover, Mr. Hadley, the National Security Advisor, shortly after his January 2005 appointment, recognized a need for his NSC team of directors to “ensure there is successful coordination and implementation, or ‘follow-through’, of policy decisions made by the POTUS, PC, or DC,”<sup>17</sup> and created a new position to track strategic policy implementation.

“The NSC advisory and policymaking process is now confronting new challenges brought on by lessons learned in interagency operations and a dramatically changing security environment.”<sup>18</sup> The attacks of 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, and the ongoing GWOT are just a few examples of the complexity of 21<sup>st</sup> Century national security challenges to which the interagency

process must evolve to become more agile and responsive. After nearly six decades since NSA47, perhaps the process bears revisiting. Retired General Anthony Zinni offered his thoughts on interagency reform in terms that, “The time has come for an interagency reorganization...it’s going to take somebody from the legislative side to impose this on the executive side.”<sup>19</sup>

#### Legislative Approach

National security reform efforts pose significant difficulty primarily due to the various stakeholders embodying different, and often conflicting, agency cultures, priorities, and decision-making processes. An inherent risk in the design of the NSC is that its organization and focus are subject to the individual management style of the chief executive, making it ill-suited to long-term consistency in the interagency process. Two Department of Defense reform efforts offer insight into how legislation may facilitate interagency reform.

The Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 “was painstakingly developed after extensive private studies and numerous public hearings. The legislation’s twin goals were straightforward: to strengthen civilian authority and improve military advice.”<sup>20</sup> It stands as one of the most significant and successful security reforms of the last century. The salient point relevant to this discussion was the resultant cultural change from independent services to ‘jointness’ of defense capabilities. The services merged toward the common ground of interoperability without sacrificing their unique service strengths. This proposal for interagency reform will require similar negotiations and ultimately concessions by various USG departments and agencies as they modestly succumb to interagency policy implementation over department-centric priorities. Additionally, executive and legislative branch compromise in the separation of powers is necessary to moderate degree. Where the congress has traditionally acquiesced to the desires of president with regard to funding, organizing and staffing the EOP, this proposal explores the opportunity for congressional oversight for the purpose of facilitating implementation of NSC-developed security strategies.

The National Defense Authorization Act of 1994 created the Commission on Roles and Missions (CORM) which “called for the NSC to direct an interagency effort to produce a quadrennial review at the beginning of each presidential term to help guide overall military strategy and spending.”<sup>21</sup> Though it contained many other initiatives the CORM report’s Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) remains its greatest legacy. Unfortunately, what was supposed to be a security strategy linked with budget strategy with the president as lead developer has historically been an almost exclusive DoD activity, likely due to their

organizational planning capacity. Of note was the emphasis of the CORM on linking strategy with funding. Similar to the CORM, this interagency reform proposal recommends a strategy-to-budget linkage to facilitate implementation of interagency policies, but neither abrogates nor replaces existing statutory authorities and responsibilities for appropriations and spending between congress and USG departments.

As a legislative action, congress should create the Office of the Director of Interagency Coordination (DIC) as the senior government official with the authority to financially leverage accountable implementation of national strategies across USG departments, agencies, and bureaus engaged in national security. In short, following NSC system approval of national strategy documents, the DIC would be responsible to the president and to congress for oversight, tracking, and reporting implementation results.

The Director would not develop security policy nor play a role in operational oversight of ongoing operations, but rather facilitate the implementation of NSC / presidential approved security policy and strategies. Legislation would direct the DIC be a Senate-confirmed position residing outside the EOP, which by design ensures greater capacity for congressional oversight of policy implementation and assessment. The DIC would be designated a statutory member of the Principals Committee and his deputy, a member of the Deputies Committee. A small staff of approximately 25-30 experienced interagency staffers would support the DIC.

As the 21<sup>st</sup> Century security environment calls for greater unity of effort among USG departments and agencies to synchronize the national instruments of power to secure vital interests, the DIC would achieve a greater degree of interagency discipline by trumping individual agency tendency to interpret and implement presidential directives largely on their own terms and within existing means. This is not to imply a loss of department cultural experience, expertise and responsibilities abrogated to another layer of government bureaucracy. Nor would it replace existing Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution Systems. Rather, congress should grant the DIC oversight responsibility of budget programming as it relates to targeting implementation of interagency policies. Additionally, fines could be levied or directives imposed following congressional review and disposition of DIC findings of insufficient funding of interagency policies that inhibit policy implementation.

The DIC is not a 'czar' for interagency coordination; that is the NSC's statutory responsibility under NSA47 and policy responsibility under NSPD1. The DIC is a compliance based entity to get after accountability so that following events like 9/11, Hurricane Katrina and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Phase IV, we won't have to ask the same question, 'How could this have happened?' The national strategies are sound; implementation of those strategies is

the challenge. What is needed to pass this type of legislation is congressional leadership, limited executive branch compromise, some money and a little vision.

### Education and Training

Education and training are critical enablers toward achieving true interagency coordination at and below the national policy-making level. The Departments of Defense, State, Justice and Commerce form the core of the interagency community that provides the bulk of USG response to complex contingency operations. Additional stakeholders include non-governmental organizations, private volunteer organizations, transnational corporations, and coalition partners. The lack of understanding found within the interagency community due to differing organizational sub-cultures, mandates, and resources further complicates coordination efforts and demands reform to enable full cooperation and unity of effort. In an undated white paper from the National Defense University's Interagency Training, Education and After Action Review (ITEA) program, the author accurately opined, "Members of the interagency community must have a clear understanding and appreciation of the scope and function of participating institutions, including their capabilities, limitations, methods, viewpoint, and culture. The lack of recognition of these characteristics during an operation increases the possibility of oversight, duplication of efforts, and interagency tension."<sup>22</sup>

A 'joint' or unified educational experience should be designed to capitalize on the strengths of the stakeholders by fostering a cooperative attitude and eliminating frustration, misunderstanding and confusion, while emphasizing teamwork and recognizing core competencies of members from different agencies. The National Defense University (NDU), under its mandate as the Defense Department's executive agent for interagency training, education and after action review program trains a limited number of senior government agency stakeholders. The contingency planning PCC of the NSC designated the NDU, in collaboration with other agencies and institutions (including the U.S. Army War College), as the executive agent for creating an educational program to improve political-military interagency coordination and planning. Interagency education symposiums held in February, July, and December 2005 and newly developed videos and distance learning initiatives are just a couple of examples of stellar progress in this area.<sup>23</sup> Many of these DoD training and education initiatives have led to fielding new organizations such as the Joint Interagency Task Force, Joint Interagency Coordination Group and Multinational Interagency Coordination Groups at the Joint (Regional Combatant Commander) and Multinational (Theater) levels.

As an example of penetration depth required in achieving true interagency reform, we should consider a tailored education program integrated into the pre-deployment training phase of deploying brigade combat teams (phase one of the army force-generation model). Furthermore, interagency curriculum pushed down to intermediate level education; and the creation of increased opportunity for civil-military educational exchange programs at the mid and senior leadership levels would further strengthen interagency competency in the workforce and between organizations.

The initiatives are not the exclusive domain of DoD. The State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization has as one of its core functions to "coordinate interagency efforts to integrate civilian and military planning, and will provide interagency leadership on: monitoring of potential states in crisis, assessing lessons learned and integrating them into operations and planning... ." <sup>24</sup> In his article published in *Joint Forces Quarterly*, last fall, Mathew Bogdanos posits that clearer inter and intra agency guidance can best achieve interagency actions at the point of execution. "The goal must be truly horizontal interagency planning performed virtually simultaneously at the tactical (task force), operational (combatant command), and strategic (Joint Staff) levels, tied together by each agency's clear policy directives derived from the National Security Strategy." <sup>25</sup>

Cultural bias, tendencies, and norms are difficult to overcome, particularly in the complex and diverse USG arena. The clear way to get everybody on a similar sheet of music is through education and training. The more familiar we become with one another's strengths and weaknesses, the better we should be able to work together in solving the challenges associated with complex contingencies. There are myriad issues needing resolution to implement a seemingly extensive program. However, a feasible start point is through NDUs ITEA program for 3-5 days of interagency orientation training for senior executives. Eventually, with enhanced civilian operational capacity, perhaps non-DoD agencies may participate in greater numbers at mid-grade and senior service colleges where interagency training is becoming embedded in the curricula.

#### Common Regional Focus

Lines on a map, like words, matter. USG departments use different maps to view the world on a regional basis. State's six regions contrast along critical national security fault lines with that of DoD's five Regional Combatant Commands (RCCs) resulting in confusing lines of communication and disunity of effort. For example, the Bureau of South Asian Affairs coordinates with CENTCOM for actions in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but with PACOM for India

and countries east. CENTCOM coordinates with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs for interagency activity in Iran, Iraq and west to Egypt, while Near Eastern Affairs then coordinates with EUCOM the rest of North Africa. EUCOM in turn, coordinates with the Bureau of Africa for sub-Saharan nations. The areas of responsibility designated to the RCCs enable rapid force projection and immediate positive impact to achieve national interests. The Department of State, for instance, lacks a similar regional approach for mitigating challenges and exploiting opportunities in regions vital to our national security.

When observing Hurricane Katrina relief efforts in New Orleans, it is instructive to note the divergent lines between relief echelons of myriad departments. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's emergency support function 'lines' did not mesh with those of the parishes, police districts or military task force areas of operation. This, along with other factors of communication, command, and control, exacerbated relief efforts. Though not an operational imperative to achieve success, more frequent interaction through gaming, simulation, and exercises would allow DoD to share its training and experience associated with rapidly adjusting zones of operation to facilitate understanding and interoperability during interagency operations. Perhaps overlapping maps mitigate 'regional group think', but in the age of transnational terrorism, it would appear difficult to create a more dysfunctional interagency system.

### Conclusion

The current national security apparatus lacks sufficient capacity for effective and full implementation of national strategies across the interagency. The NSC has served our nation well during times of peace, crisis, and prolonged conflict for the nearly sixty years of its existence. Its history of demonstrated proficiency at creating myriad national strategies to focus USG efforts against emerging threats compels understanding and appreciation before launching into debates of reform. However, "The NSC policymaking process is under increasing pressure to incorporate broader responsibilities such as more detailed planning and oversight of interagency operations in response to the problems of failed states, post-conflict stabilization, proliferation of nuclear and other WMD technology, and international terrorism."<sup>26</sup>

The events of 9/11 and the subsequent war on terrorism seemed to stimulate a move toward organizational innovation and reform which many respected government officials, scholars and leaders posited insightful observations, and creative solutions. Through legislative and executive leadership, we witnessed the creation of the Homeland Security Council, Director of National Intelligence and increased numbers of regional and functional PCCs, all within the EOP. Nevertheless, four years hence 9/11, we again hear persistent calls for government



reform in the wake of interagency response to Hurricane Katrina and a prolonged OIF Phase IV stabilization and reconstruction effort. Bolder steps are necessary, for when the USG does not efficiently apply resources across the interagency to resolve stabilization and reconstruction operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, or provide sufficient relief to hurricane victims in Louisiana and Mississippi, the result is a loss of legitimacy with our constituents and allies while creating seams of vulnerability in our national security.

In the early years of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), the military found itself leading USG response efforts in the diverse milieu of complex contingencies. The military was a logical choice primarily for its operational capacity; its cultural commitment to institutionalized training and education fostering adaptation to emerging threats and enhancing interoperability with other services, nations, and organizations; and an established regional view of the world with clearly defined areas of responsibility. The Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 and the National Defense Authorization Act of 1994 offer insights to organizational and cultural reforms brought on by legislation that in methodology, provide an encouraging road map for interagency reform across the USG.

In today's asymmetrical threat environment employing decentralized, non-contiguous expeditionary forces executing strategic policy on the ground, we must truly penetrate the core and develop operational level interagency competency. We must invest in training, education and resources toward mid-level managers to understand and apply interagency processes. While educational reform continues on a parallel course, the legislative process must lead the way for long-term change. The creation of the Director for Interagency Coordination outside of the EOP and subject to congressional oversight for policy implementation represents incremental and necessary change—with historical precedent—without undergoing massive government-wide reform that may produce unintended risk consequences. Improved interagency coordination and implementation is a critical component of government reform that improves our national capacity to defend national interests at the far edges of the empire in a globalized 21<sup>st</sup> Century world.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Donald H. Rumsfeld, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Department of Defense, March 2005), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Mathew Bogdanos, "Joint Interagency Cooperation: The First Step", *Joint Force Quarterly*, 37 (2d Quarter, 2005), 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States – 9/11 Commission Report, Executive Summary*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), 9.

<sup>4</sup> President George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 17 September 2002, foreword.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 10.

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<sup>13</sup> Bush, NSPD1, 2-4.

<sup>14</sup> Clark A. Murdock and Michele A. Flournoy, *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: U.S. Government and Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era, Phase II Report*, (Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., July 2005), 146-148; available at <http://www.csis.org>; Internet; accessed 18 November 2005.

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<sup>18</sup> Donley, 1.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 9.

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<sup>22</sup> ITEA White Paper, "International Organization Education and Training Practices: Review and Analysis for the Interagency Training, Education and After Action Review (ITEA) Program", 1; available from [http://www.ndu.edu/itea/storage/520/IO\\_Education\\_and\\_Training.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu/itea/storage/520/IO_Education_and_Training.pdf); Internet; accessed 15 November 2005.

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<sup>26</sup> Donley, 1.

